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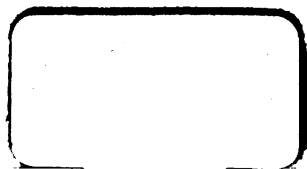
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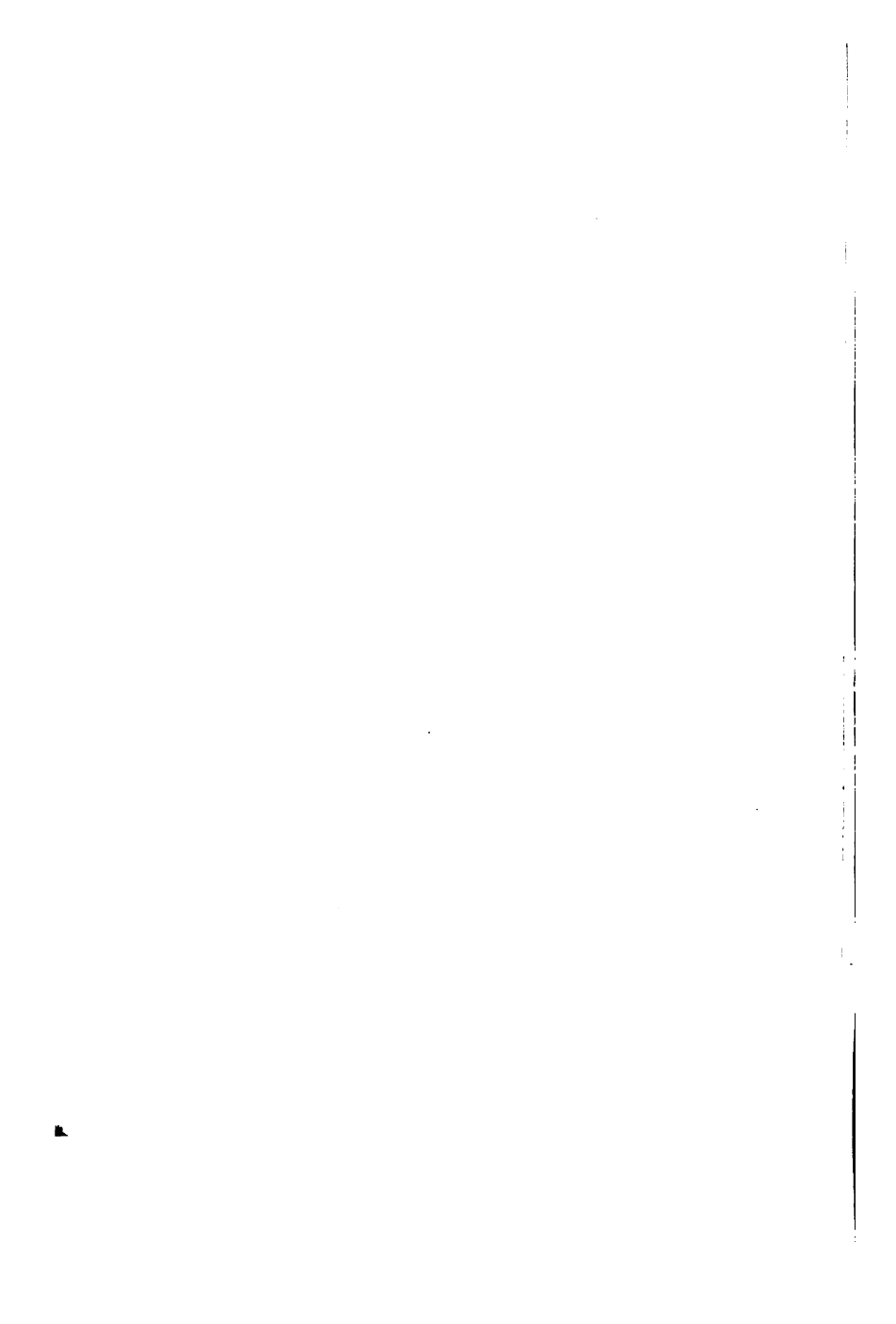
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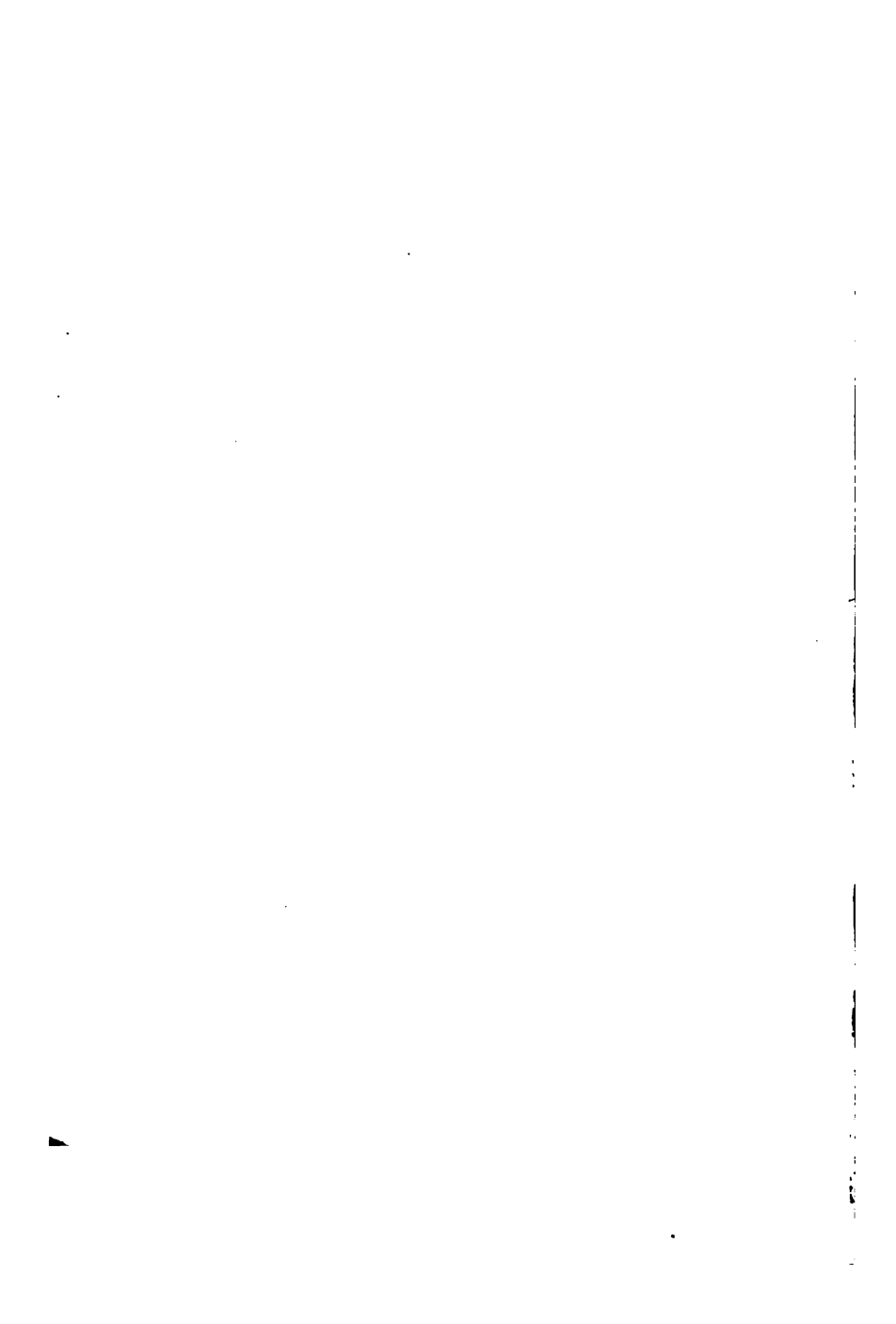


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A PEDLAR'S PACK

BY

DANIEL HENRY HOLMES



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NEW YORK

ERNEST DRESSSEL NORTH

MCMVI *E.K.*

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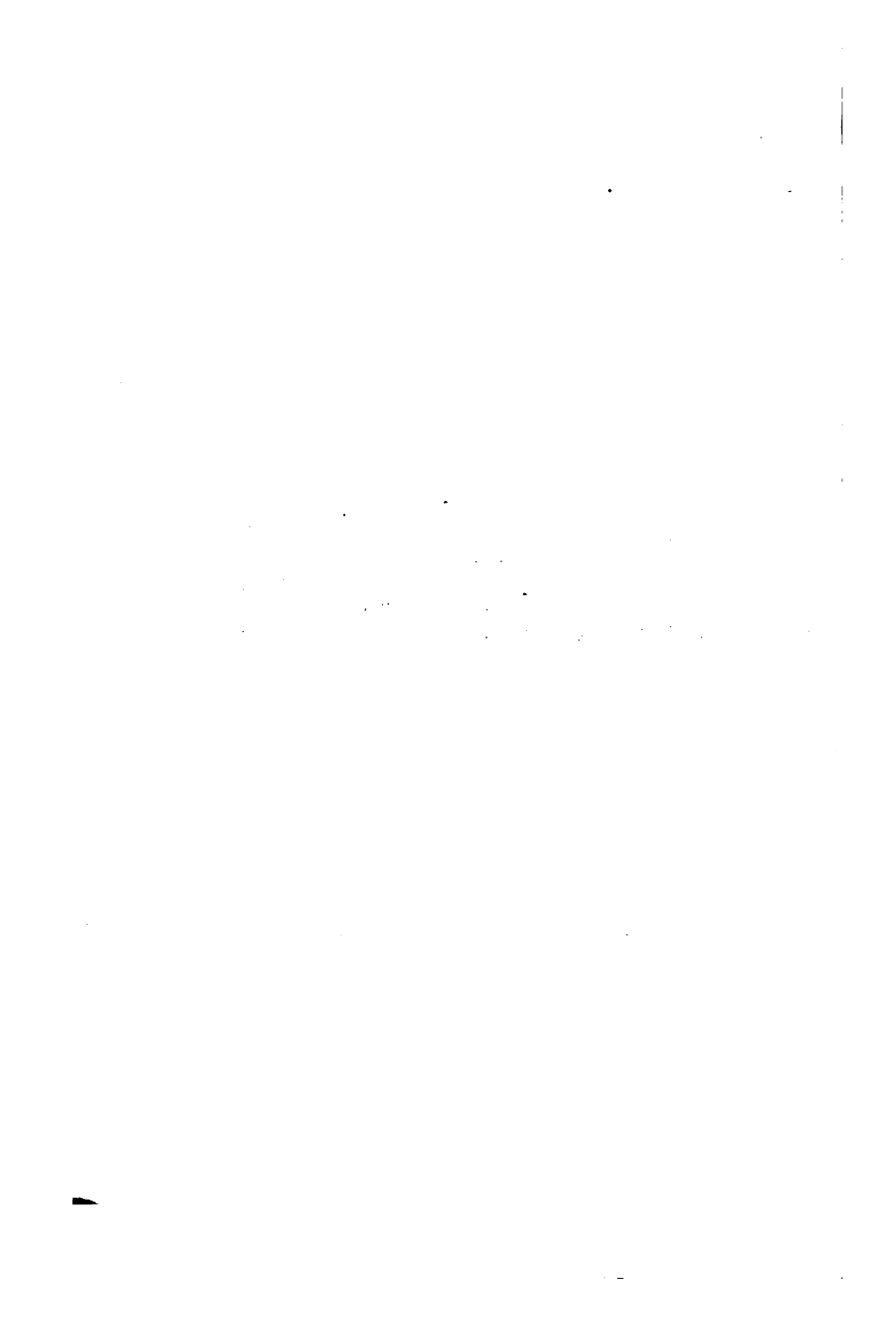
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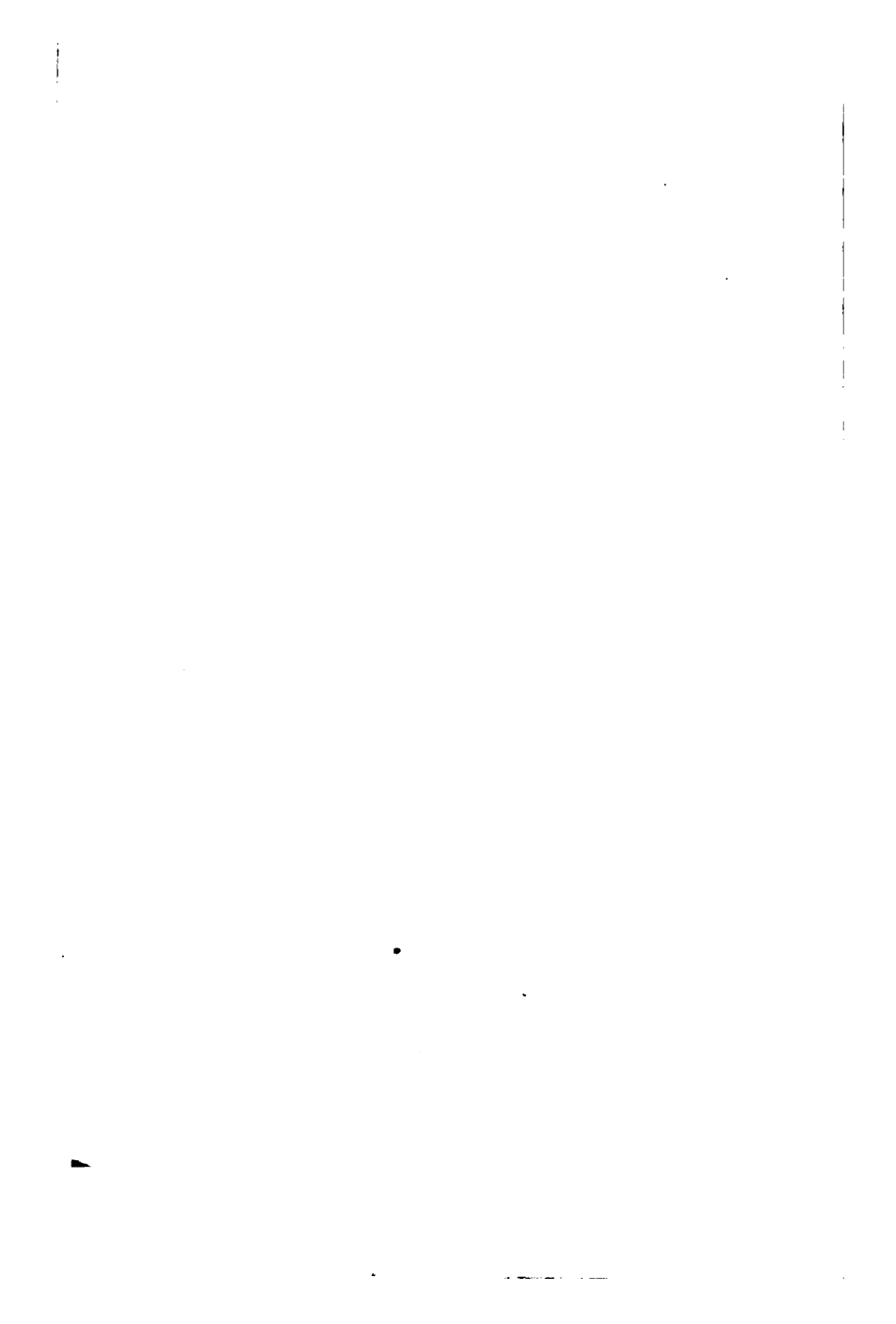
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THE DOOR-MAT





*Let others ride the solemn hack,
Or flaunt in naughty 'rickshaws;
We're nothing but a PEDLAR'S PACK
Of odds and ends and kickshaws.*

*We make pretence to little worth,
Our notes are young and thinnish;
We claim no proud Castalian birth,
Nor Master Craftsman's finish.*

*All those who step John Milton's gait,
Or follow Shakespeare's giants,
Who Homerize or Virgilate,
We don't expect for clients.*

*But if a bored or tired man
Should wish to kill a Sunday,
We'll help him out as best we can;
And a fig for Mrs. Grundy!*





CHRISTMAS FAIRIES

I

FAR up in the misty steeple,
On a cold December night,
Cluster all the small "good people,"
In their fairy veils bedight.
Hanging to the ponderous hammer,
Hanging to the bell's huge rim,
They are ready for the clamor,
They are waiting, silent, dim.

II

Sitting on the cross astraddle,
Nearest to the stars above,
Where there's scarcely room to waddle,
For a portly turtle-dove—
One is waiting fairy sentry,
For a message from Old Time,
To proclaim the Midnight's entry,
Letting loose the Christmas chime.

III

Every minute little fairies

Furled in cloaks of cedar sheaves,

Belted round with scarlet berries,

With long courier boots of leaves,

Mounted on some flying feather,

Through the loophole peep and cry,

"Christmas coming! Altogether

Get you ready, toll, and fly!"

IV

Couriers from some distant belfry,

When Midnight's already come

With a snow-flake for a palfrey,

On they fly from Spire to Dome,

Bearing news of Joy and Gladness

To the watching elves ahead;

Chasing Grief and Shame and Badness

From the path His foot will tread.

V

With each warning, fairies flutter

From the loophole up the spire,

Fairies tiptoe on the gutter,

Fairies climbing higher, higher,

Nearer to their sentry, climbing,

Waiting for the Christmas near,

Ready for the Bell a-chiming,

Ready for the Yule-log's cheer.

VI

On his coming in the distance,
Hear the whispered tinkling choir;
Every fairy stoops and listens,
Quick then, back within the spire,
Round the bell to run and clamber,
Forming one fantastic ring,
Dimpled elves have caught the hammer,
Start its slow and silent swing.

VII

At the last the long expected
Stranger Christmas Midnight comes,
With his beard all frost erected,
Carried by carolling gnomes;
With their snow-cloaks floating after,
With the frost-work on their curls
Like a picture peal of laughter,
In a broken string of pearls.

VIII

Started in its midnight shelter,
Then the bell begins to toll,
And the fairies helter-skelter,
Tumbling out of every hole,
Through the midnight clouds they scamper,
To the sleeping homes below,
Bearing in a cloud for hamper,
Holly branch and mistletoe.

IX

Down the chimneys, up the gutters,
Through the keyholes and the cracks,
Fairies all in flirts and flutters,
Skip and whisk with courtesying backs;
Sweep the hearth and deck the fender
With red berries and green thongs,
Teach the kettles, fat and slender,
How to purr their Christmas songs.

X

From man's eyelids, sorrow-laden,
Brushing heavy tears away,
Through the rosy dreams of maiden
Strewing Dance and Roundelay;
Baby stockings in each ingle,
Stretch and yawn with elfin store;
Fairies with the snow-flakes mingle,
Puff! They go! The work is o'er.





NEW YEAR FAIRIES

I

MOONBEAMS trail across the altar,
Stripped of gala trappings bare;
Wan of wing, with feet that falter,
Like the censor's breath of prayer;
Where the monks at vespers lately
Droned their masses through the nave,
Midnight comes, serene and stately,
Winter Midnight, pale and grave.

II

All the church asleep and solemn!
And the mystic moments ebb;
While the night from every column,
As a spider spins her web,
Weaves a veil from aisle to rafter,
Grimy tapestries o'ercast,
With the dreams of dim Hereafter,
With the ghosts of hooded Past.

III

All the church asleep and mourning!
Yet for all the silence, hark!
There is as a throb of warning
In the pulses of the dark.
Bodings which were voiceless yester,
From the past awake and cry;
This one night of St. Sylvester,
When the waning year must die.

IV

Of a sudden, the brazen daughters,
Rudely shaken from their sleep,
With the voice of mighty waters
Calling loud from deep to deep,
Ding-dong madly from their prison,
From the belfry overhead;
For the baby year is risen,
And the graybeard year is dead.

V

At the signal, dainty fairies
Steal from cosey nooks indoors,
Goblins leave their gargoyles aeries,
Busy pixies drop their chores;
Through the cobwebs, from all corners
Of the church, in silence come
To the portals eerie mourners
From the realm of Fairydom.

VI

When the bells have tolled the Tiding,
And the brazen sobs subside,
On their hinges, hoarse with chiding,
Lo! the portals open wide,
And the ghostly legion marches
Tiptoe, whisp'ring mystic prayers,
Through the gaunt and hoary arches,
To the distant chancel stairs.

VII

There the fairies, quiet, saintly,
Bend the knees and clasp the hands,
While strange perfumes filter faintly
From the smouldering incense stands;
And the dreaming organ falters,
Like a wind through forest trees,
Strains of unremembered psalters,
And forgotten harmonies.

VIII

When in rites, unknown to mortals,
Elfin worship has been said,
Through the far-off open portals
Comes the pageant of the dead.
Calm and kingly lies the olden
Year with snow on hair and beard,
On a lofty bier, upholden:
Four his bearers, grave and weird.

IX

Spring, abashed at new caresses,
Summer, brown, with flashing eyes,
Autumn, flushed from red wine-presses,
Winter, white and gemmed with ice;
And behind them, Hours in mourning,
Days grown gray, and Months which grieve,
Wet with tears of Dawn new-borning
Draped in weeds of widowed Eve.

X

As the burial pageant passes,
Wild white fires in censors glow,
The organ starts from sleeping masses,
Thrills of dirges, strains of woe;
Climbing up through mad crescendoes,
Till its pulses thrill the nave,
While the moonlight through the windows
Leaps and shatters like a wave.

XI

When the nave is reached the maiden
Bearers set aground the bier,
While faint voices, sorrow-laden,
Chant a requiem for the year;
Goblin sextons have uplifted
From the flags the burial-stone;
Thus far has the pageant drifted,
Lo! the pilgrimage is done.

XII

Tender hands, in loving-kindness,
Gently help the kingly dead
Down into the solemn blindness
Of his everlasting bed.
Priest there is none, black, to follow,
Book in hand to chant his loss,
But upon the graven hollow
Falls the shadow of the cross.

XIII

Then the stone uplifted crashes
Back to its appointed place;
Peace and Mercy to his ashes,
To his endless slumber Grace.
Through the dark and distant portals,
Through the silence into night,
Slowly melt the dim Immortals,
As a lunar rainbow might.

XIV

All is over! through the chapel
Scarves of moonbeams faintly trail,
Which the fretted archways dapple
Like an angel's gala veil;
All is done! Compassionately
Shadows walk the silent nave;
Only midnight, still and stately,
Only Winter, pale and grave.



DAME DARKNESS

DAME DARKNESS sits in her hiding-place,
The quietest nook in the ingle;
Morning and even, day out, day in,
Where the crickets chirp and the spiders spin,
Watching the blue smoke curl and lace,
And the gold sparks snap and jingle.

For a cheering look at the ripe red blaze,
And a stretch on the rough, black benches,
From winter snow and summer rain,
Folk come in, then off again,
While the humdrum kitchen goes its ways,
With clatter of pans and wenchies.

But she never speaks and she never stirs:
Though her hand is as soft as a mother's,
Though her voice is sweet as the voice of a bride,
She is passing shy, and fain will hide,
Till perchance it happen this lover of hers
Is left all alone by others.

And then she slips from her chimney-nook
To stand at his shoulder—unbidden
She lays on his brows her blessing palms,
And sings in a voice that soothes and calms;
But even then he may not look
On her face, for she keeps it hidden.

Her songs are only monotonous songs,
Dead of tune and of faded glories;
Her tales are worn with much telling, and gray
With dust of the years that have crumbled away
But ah! how the heart of her lover longs
For the olden songs and stories;

As, groping and halt, her voice totters along,
Half forgets and half remembers,
As the dear blind guide goes feeling her way
The dreary To-day is no longer To-day,
For his dead are alive again in the song,
And come out to him from the embers.

Ah! laugh who will, that he sits apart,
By the hour, this graybeard lover;
When a man has lived a lifelong through
In the newest song, there is nothing new,
And olden songs go best to the heart,
As Dame Darkness sings them over.



A WATCH IN THE NIGHT

I

I HAVE been looking at the Night
With eyes grown strangely blind,
A pall of darkness muffles sight,
No promise shines behind.

The blue has molten into black,
And where the moon should be
Pale Sorrow walks the milky track
Which spans Immensity.

The Stars, the winged Stars of Light
With feet in jewels shod,
Now hang the lashes of Night
Like misty tears of God.

There is no light in anything
For me, no hope thereof,
For lo! my love lies sorrowing
And has no care for Love.

II

From the deep of her sorrow my darling cries
For comfort that will not come,
And I must stand with averted eyes—
As a stranger stands—and dumb;

I who had given my dreamed-of Fame,
My Life, and all for her sake,
Must hide my love, as a thing of shame,
And hush my heart, though it break.

Ah! were it but the time to be bold,
Had I the right to be true,
I should take her close in my arms and fold
Her sorrow about us two;

I should hold her close to my heart and wring
The bitterness from her soul—
As a Hindoo sucks an adder's sting,
With my lips would I make her whole.

III

Alas! it were all one to me
If daylight come or shadow rise;
All, all is dark, I cannot see
For the tears in my darling's eyes.

IV

I seem as one in a cave, who cowers
In the silence of utter Night,
All count is lost of the slow-foot hours,
All recollection of Light;

With eyes burnt blind, with ears grown numb
As in answer to his calls,
The baying echoes sullenly come,
As rumbling waterfalls.

Could I but feel her—if I might
Be assured of her presence near,
I could endure this blindfold Night,
And hold its silence dear.

V

I will be patient in despite
Of all which must be born,
And bear the heaviness of Night,
In hope of coming Morn.

Yea, patient as the Hindoo priest,
Whose great wide eyes grow blind
For watching through the blue-black East
The Light that lives behind.

I will be patient, hoard my tears,
And hold my grief unsaid,
Lest when my Joy with morning nears
I have no tears to shed.

VI

The desert stretches bare and brown!
Like a scourge in demon's hands,
The angry yellow sun beats down
Upon the hissing sands.

Reel on, thou footsore traveller!
In the waste of sand, alone,
With flesh athirst for spring-water,
And parchèd to the bone.

O God! how blest thy well-water!
How sweet and pure her eyes!
Let me but touch my lips to her,
And keep thy Paradise!

VII

I saw her pass, her head bowed down,
With falling hands, and lingering feet,
In trailing veil, and morning gown,
That cloaked her as a winding-sheet;

I could not make her features out,
I could not see her golden hair,
For black her garments hung about,
And hooded her with spectral wear;

And yet I knew her—in my flesh
And soul I knew her—for her train
An instant touched me, and afresh
My heart burst into sudden pain.

VIII

There was a voice which sang, that night,
Far off like the drone of chimes,
A burden faint as a dream in white,
And wistful as olden times.

It lingered: then at last was still,
Like a silken skein unwound,
And silence followed, save that thrill
In the air, which shadows sound.

But as it melted Heavenward,
I knew it in my soul,
The long last sob of the silver chord,
The ring of the golden bowl.

IX

What have you now to say to me,
You wise old Stars, whose still
Far eyes have stayed my agony,
And helped me weep my fill?

Your eyes are wet, and yet it seems
As if the pain were gone. . . .
Has Sorrow vanished with the dreams?
Are we so near to Dawn?

X

It is not morning? No—not yet;
But in the distant Eastern night,
Beyond those hills' black parapet,
There is the blossom of a light.

It is not morning; but the stars
Are blinking, weary with the watch.
A breath of air is awake, and mars
The sodden silence with its catch.

It is not morning; all is dark!
And yet my soul, benumbed where it lay,
As children stir to peer and hark,
Has felt the call of coming Day.

XI

I had no words to say my pain,
How shall I sing my joy?
Alas! that words should be so vain,
And verse but an idler's toy!

When Joy shall come—for come it will,
In its appointed time—
Were it not best the lips be still,
Than lisp a foolish rhyme?

Say nothing, and my treasure keep
By language undefiled,
Content that I can simply weep
For Happiness, as a child.

XII

To a ragged veil the shadows wear
Across the gate of Dreams,
Which Dawn repels, with flashing hair,
And crimson scarf of beams.

The hooded hills repeat the light,
In flush of red and gold,
And Heaviness, which endured the night,
Is still, as a tale that is told.

What though my heart is dulled and wet
With the sorrow now gone past,
Is Earth not rippling with dewfall yet,
Though Day has come at last?

My heart fills full of the joyful rays,
As a cup with laughing wine:
And opens wide to the crystal maze
Where the singing sunbeams shine.

XIII

Come to me, darling, the fields are clad
In sunshine and summer air,
The world is glad, as I am glad,
And fair as thou art fair.

Come to me! through this Virgin World
We will walk the ways of love,
With the youth of the season about us furled,
And the smile of the sun above.

My heart and the woods are fresh again,
With the blooming of songs and flowers.
Come to me, darling! and leave thy pain
For this golden world, which is ours.





HANDEL'S LARGO

O LORD, my God! It is Thy will
That this, my love, be dead;
My haggard eyes have wept their fill,
My very heart is shed.

I sorrow till I can no more,
And numb have grown at last;
For now the bitterness is o'er,
The sting of pain is past.

How she was loved, I had, Thou know'st,
No words to tell it in,
I loved her till it seemed almost
Such worship was a sin.

She was the crown of life to me,
My love, my sun, my air;
More than I ever hoped of Thee,
In answer to my prayer.

The purest soul that ever fell
To walk this earth apace,
It had made Paradise of Hell,
To look upon her face.

A jealous God in truth Thou art,
I loved her all too well,
And as a bolt upon my heart
Thy sore displeasure fell.

And yet I have nor thought nor said
An angry word, not one—
O God! Thy name be hallowèd!
Thy holy will be done!

Vouchsafe but this, my poor request:
When Thou hast born her far
To golden meadows of the Blest,
In some flamboyant star,

When cleansèd of this Earth of ours,
Its weariness and stain,
Through silver fields of lily-flowers,
An angel once again,

In splendor of her robes of light,
In flash of golden wings,
She walks triumphant in Thy sight,
With red rose mouth that sings,

Let not the Past be all forgot!
Let not her soul forbear
In wilderment, and answer not
An echo to my prayer;

And I will humbly bow me low,
And bless Thy ruthless will;
Do Thou but let her hear and know
How dear I love her still.



HOW MY SHIP CAME HOME

It was a sere and yellow day,
In the olden half of the year,
A sodden mist hung on the bay,
The sob of the sea was near.

The tide slipped out, its sparkle blurred,
Its voice grown shrill and old,
And with the breeze of a sudden stirred
An acrid smell of mould.

Half seen on the edge of the farther coast,
Where the fog-veil wears to a shred,
New York loomed ominous, like the ghost
Of a city long since dead.

Toward me as I stood in wait,
Far out on the wave-eaten pier,
Across the distant, dim sea-gate,
A shadowy ship drew near.

A faint and uncouth bulk begrimed
With smoke and the rust of foam,
Which swam so sorely, as I timed
Its laggard coming home.

And in a freak there came to me
A scene of the legend days,
When kings went downward to the sea,
In triumph song of praise;

To kneel exultant on the sands,
While belted deep in foam
Their priests held high their blessing hands,
For that the ships come home:

The slow and sated ships of prey,
With wide white wings unfurled,
Within whose blood-dyed bellies lay
The ransom of a world.

When through the mists that blur and warp
The steamer drawing near,
A figure suddenly grew sharp,
A radiant face grew clear.

Oh, thou who since hast grown to be
My hope and comforter,
A gift more rich and rare to me
Than ships of gold and myrrh,

Sweet face that broke as a sun ashine
That autumn monochrome,
I knew when first thine eyes met mine
It was my ship come home.



LIEBFRAUENSAFT

A STRANGER'S room, an empty room,
The door ajar, the curtains close.
A restful refuge? Ah! to whom?
Perhaps a sacred home? But whose?

Apart from fire-light, all is gloom,
And all is silence save the clock.
A stranger's room, an empty room,
Its door ajar, its clew alock.

A table littered crazily
With random books and vagrant flowers,
An arm-chair yawning lazily,
An arm-chair used to quiet hours;

An easel here, a bracket there,
While yonder shimmering mirrors loom. . . .
A room you might see anywhere,
An empty room, a stranger's room.

And yet o'er all—unheard—unseen—
A subtle meaning in the air
Reveals to him whose scent is keen
A woman's presence lingers there.

And so 'tis with the Poet's soul;
From wildest song to deepest prayer,
One subtle meaning scents the whole—
A woman's memory lingers there.





ESAU

From the East where Jabbok and Jordan meet,
The sun springs on to the desert's brink;
Of a sudden, beneath his red young feet,
The sombre waste of the sands is pink.

On the farther bank, under swinging palms,
Where the rank green life of the river sings,
Like a flock of gulls which Sleep becalms,
A camp lies poised on tented wings.

But here, on the desert side, is seen,
Against the sands as an etching, clear,
One motionless figure cut sharp and clean,
A gaunt hairy man in shepherd's gear.

His tangled beard and matted hair
Are red as brass, and his limbs and throat.
Where the ragged goatskin leaves them bare,
Shine red as the plush of a panther's coat.

And yet for all he is furred like a beast.
In the set of head, in the body's pose,
Resplends a faith unknown to the priest,
And greater courage than warrior knows.

He, the elder born to a king's estate,
And heir to the blessing which God fulfils,
In the huddled flocks at his father's gate,
And the roving herds on a thousand hills;

On the eve of his ripening chiefdom spoiled
Of his birthright: stripped by a cozening knave
Of all his greatness; by trickery foiled
Of the blind last blessing his father gave!

A filcher sneaks to the prince's place,
And the pure skies smile on the lucky thief,
While the heir goes forth with averted face,
A man of sorrow and acquaint with grief.

Oh, the bitterness of the outer dark,
And the barren waste of the ways he trod;
What wonder the banished heart grew stark
With hate of his fellow, and wrath of God!

For this was God's own work: laid down
In infinite Wisdom and Truth sublime,
His Justice smiles on the trick of a clown,
His Law confirms a fraternal crime.

So years have passed; he has waited long
In sorrow and silence more bitter than tears,
But a reckoning comes if a man be strong,
The time is come—his vengeance nears.

Across the river, at last the camp,
At the call of morning, springs from its sleep,
With hollas of herdsman and cattle's stamp,
With flirt of tents, and the bleat of sheep.

And slowly straggling down to the ford,
Where silver waters in ripples hum,
The hosts of Jacob, beloved of the Lord,
With pageantry vast and ungainly, come.

Yea, herd on herd, and flock after flock,
Unnumbered as the sands of the shore,
And hulking droves of camels which rock
Beneath their burden of precious store;

While well protected, far in the rear—
From the journey's peril now pressing hard,
The wives, bondwomen, and children near
In creaking chariots, which spearsmen guard.

And in the van of his household, grown
Much changed from the one once loved so well,
As beseems a chieftain, walking alone,
He sees the supplanter, Israel.

Yea, his time is coming. The masses pour
Across the ford to the higher lands
In a jumbled stream, and halt before
The mound, where the motionless figure stands.

And through his hosts, up the shelving sands,
The chieftain comes to the meeting-place
With head held low and imploring hands,
To the shepherd's feet, and falls on his face.

For a moment the strong, sure eyes that looked
In the face of sorrow nor ever flinched,
Fall stern on this man, in grovelling crouch'd—
For a moment the hairy hands have clinched.

Then meaning comes as sight to the blind,
As a curtain rent in twain, and he hears
A voice cry aloud in his ear, behind
The pitiless silence of former years:

“Lo ! this is He I have chosen to rule
All things of the earth which have being and live,
I have made My land this man's footstool,
I have given him all which God can give.

“His flocks have I made to outnumber the sands,
I have covered My hills with his countless herds,
I have wrought his greatness with Mine own hands,
I have marked his ways with Mine own words.

“I gave him Leah the wife of his home,
I gave him Rachel the bride of his soul,
That he might stand in all time to come,
In the flesh, in the spirit, a king made whole;

“ But Sleep which closes the just man’s eyes
With soft pure hands, he has never seen.
His soul is black with the olden lies,
And Peace may not dwell in a heart unclean.

“ But thou whose flesh and soul I have tried,
As virgin gold in the furnace flame,
Whom I made to walk dark ways, beside
Blind grief, and hand in hand with shame,

“ Till in flesh and soul thou art cleansed of all
Base manhood, and tempered strong and true,
Thou Son of Mine Anger, on thee I call—
Do thou this work which I may not do.”

He hears, and the clinched red hands unclasp,
The hard stern eyes grow suddenly sweet.
He stoops, and lifts in his hairy grasp
The prostrate brother beneath his feet.

So stands Red Esau—the Pardoner—etched
Upon the sands, at the sun’s new birth,
With head uplifted, and arms outstretched. . . .
The Cross, as first it was seen on the Earth.





DANIEL

LIKE a condor's wings, in their huge, still sweep,
The brazen portals asunder unfold,
The lurid flare of the torches creep,
Like serpent tongues, through the Lion's Hold.

A hurtle of arms as the soldiers halt,
A hissing curse from the hungry priests,
Then, the bolts ring shrill on the grim basalt,
And the Prophet stands at bay with the beasts.

The viscous walls of the dungeon, asweat
With blood, and with rotting things alight,
Rise sheer to their far-away parapet,
In the hollow black of tropical night.

In the core of the pit, upon his breast
With folded arms—his feet unshod,
His face uplift to the Stars of Rest
He stands alone, and looks at God.

He can hope no ruth, he will crave no grace,
Let them do their worst, he is well content,
And he stares, with Death grinning in his face,
With eyes unflinching, with brows unbent.

About the walls, like a noiseless tide,
In foam-flecked eddies that fade and loom,
The lissome shadows unceasing glide:
They are close at hand, the slaves of Doom.

In whirls imperceptibly narrowing—
The tightening cords of an evil dream—
Around him winds, an ominous ring
With fangs that glisten, and eyes that gleam.

Their bellies grate on the fat, dank sands!
Let the King despair! Let the Priests rejoice!
For the end is near! Of a sudden, the hands
Of the Prophet fall, and he lifts his voice:

“Thou Great, Grim God of Israel!
Thou knowest how true I have served Thee, Lord!
I have walked Thy ways, when all others fell,
I have borne Thy shield, I have bared Thy sword.

“The ungodly have staked their might against mine:
From the deep I call! Wilt Thou hear me now?
Though Death were mine, yet Shame were Thine,
Make bare Thine arm in our business, Thou!

“And ye! Ye who fatten of tears and blood!
Who are craving ever, insatiate!
Who have drunk of Shame, till you found it good,
Ye Spawn of Hell! Ye tools of Fate!

"I who know you well, who have known you long,
I spurn your anger with scornful heel;
Your fangs and claws are sharp and strong,
But my Soul is Rock, and my Will is Steel.

"Down with your heads, as I call your names!
Thou lion, Craft, with the hoary mane!
Thou, Pride, who wert forged with claws of flames!
Thou Greed, who wert littered of Gold and Gain!

"Down, Sloth! Down, Doubt, to thy bed of mire!
Thou and thy twin whelps, Lie and Fear!
Thou lioness Lust, with thy throat afire!
Down, I say! I am Master here."

As the voice soars upward on wings of wrath,
The ceaseless circles grow slowly still;
And the monsters cower on their blood-stained path:
For Man is King, if he speak his Will.

Their limbs stretch huge and strain o'er the sands,
Till their breaths pant hot on his garments' fold,
They lick the spot where the Prophet stands
Erect, with implacable arms extolled.





STABAT MATER

It was the middle night, and snowing sore.
Outdoors, there was no light, and all lay black,
But for the fevered luscence of the snow,
And hidden shafts of angry yellow fire
With every yawning of some random door:
A night of woful, weary barrenness.

Indoors, in sullen discipline proceeds
The rugged routine of the Station-House:
The watchmen, cursing that the night was raw,
The sergeants, waiting their relief, the crowd
Of blinking idlers huddled round the stove—
At rest dejectedly; the constable
In charge, asleep upon the record, smeared
With crimes, and sins, and moral leprosies,
And in the background, where grim gratings catch
On bright-worn steel the flicker of the lamp,
Strange forms and shadows, prowling to and fro,
Like noiseless eddies of a fretful tide,
Or caged beasts of prey, with hungry eyes,
One sat acrouch in a corner, not within
The bars, yet where the shade was merciful
And partly cloaked her infamy from sight;

A haggard thing, unnoticed and absorbed.
Her ragged gown fell limply as she sat
With shawl drawn taut across her breast, her hands
Like evil claws, turned upward in her lap,
In the easy pose of practised beggary;
Her hair, dishevelled, hung about her neck;
The lips and eyelids twitched, unused to light,
While in the bleared and dimly conscious eyes
There glowed the pathos of an utter loss.

What was she? "Vagrant"—so the record read.
Alas! this was not all they knew of her,
But in rough charity these men had used,
Of all her nameless titles, one that was
Not abject utterly, to brand her with.
A sorry sight, this fallen creature: one
To sadden man of his Humanity.

Just then the door swung wide, and from without,
With quick, sharp stamp of boot, and shaggy shake
Of spattered great-coat, loomed into the room
A huge patrolman, bearded to the eyes
With icicles, who bore with clumsy care
A plump, round ball of deftly fastened wraps,
Down in the depths of which a baby slept,
And stalking to the desk, laid tenderly
His burden down; then straightened up and grinned.

The chief, who sprawled across the book, awoke
And bared his teeth with something like a smile,
While all who waited, growling round the room,
Came crowding up, with eager faces, whence

Strange lights of tenderness and pity shone,
About the tiny visitor asleep.
And even o'er the gloom, behind the bars,
Uncouth in homage, sudden stillness fell.

There were no questions asked how came it there,
How was it found adrift upon the town,
A flower fresh-dropped from Heaven, and smelling
sweet

Of God and purity; an offshoot of debauch,
Of crime perhaps, as tender violets shoot
From nameless things that rot in open air.

It may have been the close, foul air which hung
Upon the room like a dragon's breath, or else
The clumsy tenderness of great rough hands,
But from its sleep, the last long draught of peace,
The baby started blinking, and gave voice
In piping little cries, that fluttered lost
In that hoarse Babel of distracted men.

No one had thought there was a nurse at hand;
But at the cries, the squalid thing which sat
Far in the corner, heedless, as one drunk
With the dull lethargy of hopeless Shame,
Sprang to her feet, alive again, and walked
With steady gait, with placid wave of hands,
Commanding all to stand aside for her,
And with the majesty of Motherhood
Took to her trained arms the foundling, bared
Her bosom, which was all of womanhood

Her life had left her. As the baby closed
With ravenous pink fingers on the breast,
She looked around upon the men who stood
Unconsciously respectful, with a smile
That came through tears, like some white distant light—
An echo from a past which had been pure.

Her squalor left her, even shame was gone,
She stood redeemed—a Woman once again;
A child had cleansed her, for a time, at least.



THE UNEXPRESSIVE SHE



A FOREWORD

*"Art is but Nature, seen"—says Zola—
"Through a temperament!" Good man!
Plain as the nose on your face . . . et voila!
Let us adapt this—if we can.*

*There is a thing than Art more troublesome:
Woman, forsooth! for some have wist
She is unique; some, a world; and double, some;
Woman is x , says the Algebrist.*

*Test the rule, with strictness Newtonic;
Problems, like nuts, must be cracked by rote:
Woman is Art, which Nature ironic
Hides from Man, in a petticoat.*





I

PISCATRIX

ONE morning when Spring was in her teens,
A morn to a poet's wishing,
All tinted in delicate pinks and greens,
Miss Bessie and I went fishing.

I in my rough and easy clothes,
With my face at the sun tan's mercy,
She with her hat tipped down to her nose,
And her nose tipped *vice versa*.

I with my rod, my reel, and my hooks,
And a hamper for luncheon recesses,
She with the bait of her comely looks,
And the seine of her golden tresses.

So we sat us down on the sunny dike,
Where the white pond-lilies teeter,
And I went to fishing, like quaint old Ike,
And she like Simon Peter.

All the noon I lay in the light of her eyes,
And dreamily watched and waited,
But the fish were cunning and would not rise,
And the baiter alone was baited.

So when the time for departure came,
My bag hung flat as a flounder,
But Bessie had neatly hooked her game—
A hundred-and-fifty-pounder.

II

EVE

ON the hill-side where the pines grow wide,
And grass in the sunshine dapples,
We strolled at random one even-tide,
Seeking the first May-apples.

She was a child, yet the soul whereof
On the brink of womanhood hovers,
Not over-young to have dreamed of love,
Too young to have thought of lovers.

And I was a lad who thought him manned
By big rough voice and bearing;
But who dreamed to squeeze a woman's hand
The utmost bounds of daring.

From good old jacket-and-pinafore days
We had grown, we two together,
To look to each other for blame or praise,
Without asking why or whether.

We had never dreamed of a chaperone,
Yet then, without any reason,
We felt half shy that we were alone;
There was something wrong with the season.

We had not spoken while strolling along,
But for all our lips were idle
My heart beat time to a strange new song,
And her eyes were soft and bridal.

We stooped: in the crook of a grim old root,
A green-hooded apple beckoned,
The time was ripe for forbidden fruit,
And old Adam within me wakened.

Our fingers met, our lips came close,
And lo! the secret abiding!
We found where the fruit of knowledge grows,
That rascal Cupid, hiding.

III

LAZARUS

ON the old piazza, o'erlooking the sands,
We were sitting alone in shadow;
It was winter time, but in Florida lands
Even winter is El Dorado.

It was late—the light lay on the seas
Like a sleeping goddess's tresses,
And all was still but moss on the trees,
Athrill with susurrant caresses.

She was crooning a half-forgotten song
Which her negro mammy had taught her;
And there came to me a shadowy throng
Of memories over the water.

They were of a night—such a night as this,
When, unlearned in life and lying,
Two children dreamed they had pledged in a kiss
A love that should know no dying.

Five years ago, as the calendar goes,
Yet it seemed vast shoreless ages,
Since we sat together, still and close,
And turned the marvellous pages.

The world was afar, our love was fair. . . .

We were children and knew no better.
And now she's engaged to a millionaire,
And I am trying "belles-lettres."

We had talked it over, both heart-whole,
When we first had met that morning,
And had laughed: "Amen! God have its soul!"
This love which had died a-borning.

But ghosts will walk in the haunting hours,
And the hidden graves grow claimant,
So it came to pass that this love of ours
Arose in its burial raiment.

To-day had vanished before its spell,
I forgot I had ceased to love her;
And she—well, her head on my shoulder fell,
And we lived our dead love over.

IV

AFTER-GLOW

THE season had closed as seasons will,
With the grand gala supper and German:
Now the lights were out, the music still. . . .

The feast had shrunk to a sermon.

In the air, sweet-scented with coming dawn,
We were walking, we two, the last time,
The moon-flecked path across the lawn,
Where we used to stroll for pastime.

It was a silent and halting walk,
This walk that should know no morrow;
It was late, and we, too tired to talk,
Was it really fatigue, or sorrow?

Her hand hung listless upon my arm,
And my heart was busy, thereunder,
Recording her every trick and charm;
What was hers at work on, I wonder?

We had grown to know each other so well
In the mountains, where, willy-nilly,
The soul must cast its conventional shell,
And lounge *en déshabillé*.

An acquaintance barely six weeks old!
But the stiffest acquaintance mellows
In Virginian summer all blue and gold!
We had come to be grown playfellows;

Such playmates as fairy-tales prattle of,
Unconscious of guile and scheming,
Who had never spoken—nay, thought of love,
In our sweet midsummer's dreaming.

It was over. We came to her end of the lawn,
And parted—as sister and brother;
I wandered back with the dream now gone,
And knew we had loved each other.

V

PENELOPE

By the open window she sat intent,
In the waning shimmer of daylight,
An old pastel which years have blent
To a monochrome of gray light.

There was nothing striking about her dress,
Nothing salient about her beauty,
In outline faint as Happiness,
In color sober as Duty.

Her eyes, where coming shadows dawn,
And dying sunshine lingers,
Alone spake forth as she knitted on,
With soft, swift, silent fingers.

And oh, the tale those sweet eyes told,
To the rhythm of her placid motion,
Like the songs the singing stars unfold
From the restless dreams of ocean.

They told of radiant far-away lands,
Where Love still walked, a maiden
With brows unkissed, and folded hands
Across a bosom flower-laden.

No worldly creeds to smear it o'er,
No social racks to dwarf it,
A love well worth the striving for,
Though life itself the forfeit.

How welcome had it been to me,
With all its griefs and dangers!
It might have been or still might be;
Alas! We were only strangers.

And so my hungry fancy sped,
When her knitting came untoward,
A knot—snap! went the silken thread,
The magical eyes were lowered.

Penelope's veil unravelled came,
And my golden dream lay shattered;
She was nothing now but a worthy dame
At work on . . . Pshaw! what mattered!

VI

ARIEL

On a boulder kissed by the sun and foam
We were lazily looking after
The fishing-smacks, as they waddled home
On waters athrill with laughter.

Beneath us the surf came wooing the sand,
With the wordless song of the sirens;
And the redolent south-wind walked the land
Like the virgin Haydee of Byron's.

But sweet as it was and musical,
This fresh eclogue of the water,
More tunefully tender was she than all,
My girl, this Ocean-daughter.

With eyes where the blue grows pale or strong,
As the sea's between deeps and shallows,
And lips where a smile will leap to a song,
Like the burst of a crimson aloes.

So I turned from the Blue, which allures and befools,
In its very play so stormy,
To the restful depths of the stainless pools,
Where her soul lay playing before me.

And I fancied no love born in tainted haunts
May mirror in them its fashion,
No man durst sully these crystal fonts
With the lees of an earthly passion.

Yet a time must come when her soul will wake
To love, and the pain of its thralling,
Will rise, as Undine came from her lake,
At a random idler's calling.

And then—well then I shall try to forget
That she made me remember heaven. . . .
But pshaw! This is all conjecture yet,
For the little one's only seven.

VII

AMARYLLIS

THE souging boughs went to and fro,
Like fans in a drowsy measure,
Across the glen where we lolled, we two,
One day of golden leisure.

The droning humdrum Every-day
Had been growing dull and duller,
Till it melted, as hills melt far away,
In a haze of tender color.

The place was secluded; the time ripe noon;
No fear of a kill-joy comer.
In the holy fragrance of full-blown June,
We two were alone with Summer.

About us the wild-flowers nodded in flocks,
Telling each other stories,
Or gossiped about the fit of their frocks,
Or the set of their yellow glories.

I lay full length in the grass, grown deep,
And followed with jealous aching
The madcap sunbeams play bopeep
With the halo her hair was making.

I felt all loved her, this Child of the Wood,
That it was because she was present
The flowers smelled sweet, the breezes wooed,
And the cooling shade was pleasant.

And I, who had never found heart to tell
The dreams I had builded of her,
Grew bold with these things, which wooed so well,
And learned how to play the lover.

Need the song be sung and the sequel told?
The wind that played with the lilies
Was laughing then as it laughed of old
At the story of Amaryllis.

VIII

CINDERELLA

THE days had grizzled as Summer died,
And that day was its lone last mourner,
The skies themselves were transmogrified
From our dreamy chimney corner,

Where under a mantel a century old,
On a hearth long vigils made hoary,
A wood-fire sketched in crimson and gold
The scenes of a wonderful story.

I lounged in a chair, most nobly planned
For the expanse of Falstaff's surcingle,
And upon a tabouret, close to my hand,
Sat the guardian sprite of the ingle.

A queer little figure, demure, all in gray,
So still with her downward lashes,
She seemed a puff of the smoke astray
From its home, deep under the ashes.

Was it the burden the green logs sang?
Or the pictures builded of embers?
Was it the mystic meanings which hang
Like ghosts about dead Novembers?

I cannot say, but there seemed to rise,
From the depths where the flame lay glassy,
In strange old metres and sceneries,
The tale of this musing lassie;

Till this odd little midget, so still and gray,
From the gulf in the embers yawning
Came forth, a creature as splendid as Day,
In the light of love, new dawning.

The ashes in gloaming had done it all,
And here's an end to the story:
At the fairy godmother Fancy's call
Cinderella puts on her glory.

IX

EPHEMERA

THE breeze was as soft as a lover who sues,
On the rocks where the surf came breaking,
We two were alone, and the fiend was loose—
'Twas a gala night for love-making;

I fresh from Bonn and the cults thereof,
Who had grown an unbeliever,
A pathologist who considered love
As a sort of malignant fever;

And she, that paragon friend of friends,
A society belle in vacation,
With the world and the flesh at her finger-ends,
And the devil himself at flirtation.

We were sitting, I think I have said before,
Alone in the sweet-scented weather;
And it seemed as if the sea and the shore
With my lady were leagued together.

For it came to pass (who has known the sea,
Or the spell of a woman's presence,
Will understand) there came over me
A thirst for rejuvenescence.

Leander swam the moonlit seas,
Orlando roamed the garden. . . .
I came to doubt Philosophy's
Subservience as a warden;

If all things but Youth and Love are vain,
Such topics alone really bardic,
Why be the exception, and why remain
A coelebs a-glycocardic? ¹

She lay shut-eyed, and lips apart,
So fair on the granite's bistro,
I forgot her love was an actress's part,
I forgot my degree! and kissed her.

I knew it must pass in a twinkling away,
I felt that health was not in it,
Yet, for all we met as strangers next day,
We had really loved, a minute.

¹ Medico-Greek - Without a sweetheart.

X

CIRCE

IN the eerie wake of the white moonbeams
Through the dim conservatory
The flowers lay sleeping their feverish dreams
Of tropical shame and glory;

For the air was filmy with fragrant breath,
Like a veil wrought in bridal laces,
And the light shone strange as light beyond death,
With the glow of their straining faces.

On a rustic seat, with brows close pressed
To the moss where the sheen fell chilly,
With drooping shoulders and panting breath,
She lay, like a sun-sick lily.

Through the open windows, all glaze and blare,
Through the palm-trees' swaying curtain,
With tinkle and hop of a country fair
Came music in bursts uncertain.

There was nothing strange in our being there,
Nothing tragic as in romances,
We were only tired and fain of fresh air,
And had come to rest between dances.

But for all her listless and graceful pose,
There was something more than languor
In the deep green eyes that close and unclosed,
Like a hungry panther's in anger.

A subtle spell as of poisoned wine
Fell from them upon me slowly,
Till Sin came forth in robes divine,
And Shame itself grew holy.

The world had triumphed, the flesh had won,
While the deep green eyes still flash on. . . .
My soul went down like a sorrowing sun
In a turgid sea of passion.

The music stopped just then, and the crowd
Came pouring, a turbulent Babel:
Where was Circe now? The haziest cloud
In the shadow realms of Fable.

XI

PYGMALION

It was coming night; on the hearth of stone
The weary fire, grown fainting,
Cast over the room a sober red tone,
Like the glow of an olden painting.

Without, bleak winds and gray light swept
The hill-sides shrunken and lonely;
But the curtains were drawn, within doors slept
Shy darkness and silence only.

And yet not only, for indistinct
As the lights and shadows wrestled,
With wandering eyes and fingers linked,
A shadowy woman nestled.

One could trace at most the faint outline
Of her figure, in darkness swallowed,
But the face was a-shine—a face divine—
With the pathos of Fancies hallowed.

There was pain in the eyes, but the pain nigh spent,
Of a sorrow that soothes and blesses;
And the parted lips were redolent
With the scent of coming caresses.

Such clinging there was and subtle grace
In the meanings that hovered o'er her,
That Love stole out of its hiding-place
And cast my heart before her.

Thump! Thump! A footstep in the hall;
She rose—it was clear in a moment,
She knew He was coming—and that is all
Her longing alone in the gloam meant.

Her love was there for the plucking, but not
My hand, the hand she was craving;
Pygmalion, I, the fatuous sot,
In love with his marble graving.

XII

MADONNA

I STOOD in some old nave grown brown
With shadows immemorial;
Beneath huge pillars sweeping down
Like pageantries historial,

Toward the chancel where a priest
As faint as a shadow stood droning,
With shaking hands outspread to the East,
The chant of unknown Atoning.

So holy was the place and vast,
That it seemed, as I looked and listened,
As if my soul had come at last
To a worship reviviscent.

When from the outer light that shone,
As a blessing from the portal,
A woman came, absorbed and alone,
In serenity more than mortal.

It was not that her face was fair,
And tenderly chaste her vesture,
It was not that she seemed a prayer
In her very gait and gesture;

It was not that the sunlight stole
Through the stained glass and kissed her—
As though some wandering vestal soul
Had recognized a sister.

But with her presence there awoke
Of a sudden to keenest living,
From prayer-worn stone and tear-stained oak,
The perfume of Thanksgiving.

She kneeled, and holy echoes rolled
Through the church, the shadows parted—
It seemed as though the Faith of old
From its sleep of ages had started.

And a child's belief, long numb and gray,
As an insect webbed by a spider,
Grew young again as I watched her pray,
And I knelt like a child beside her.

XIII

PSYCHE

IN the trysting time when coming night
Meets day, his pilgrimage over,
And lifts her mouth to the kiss of light,
On the lips of her dying lover;

When the panting landscape, flushed with fire,
In declining color wavers,
Like the after-thrill of a stricken lyre,
The time for the plagal quavers;

When silence steals upon the world
On tiptoe, and strangely moulded
Of shadowy pinions softly unfurled
And sun-wings slowly folded;

When unshapen pageants walk the clouds
In the guise of fairy mummers,
And woodlands hide under purple shrouds
The livery of glowing summers;

When scents all mellow, and scenes all merge,
Into harmonies and gloaming,
On the brink of day, on the shadows' verge,
I saw my sweetheart coming.

Across a world that had held us estranged,
In the noontide's glare and clamor
I saw her coming with love unchanged
Toward me through the glamour.

Attired in sober robes of gray,
A scarf her single adorning,
But fair and pure as the breath of May,
And glad as the face of Morning.

Before her Space and Time fell past,
As we slowly came together,
We were heart to heart, my love, at last,
In the tenderly melting weather.

My arms were open—alas! in vain,
There was nothing there but shadow—
For she is off on the coast of Maine,
And I am in Colorado.



**DECORATIVE PANELS
FOR PAINTERS ONLY**



A LONG WAY AFTER W. E. H.

*Sons of the North-light,
Up with your brushes!
Children of Pigment,
Thumb thro' your pallet!
Look on the flamboyant World about ye.
Hark to the resonant Soul within ye.
Sons of the Rainbow,
Limbs of the Spectrum,
Paint!*





BLACK ON GOLD

IN blinding golds the sun has set,
The yellow fields are ablaze with grain:
Against this halo of fiery mane
She stands—a pillar of Jet.

Some sombre peasant garb uncouth,
Which falls, from shoulder to ankle bone,
In rough swift folds, bedrapes alone
The Moabitess Ruth.

No filet curbs her solemn gloom
Of hair, close coiled about her head,
Her eyes are black with grief unshed,
And fathomless as Doom.

Her arms are naked, her feet are bare:
A widow stray from far-off lands—
And yet as straight as Right she stands,
And stark as Hebrew prayer.

WHITE ON BRONZE

AGAINST the huge bronze palace gates
Which guard the Court of the Winged Bull,
The Queen, resolved and beautiful,
Hadassah Esther waits.

Behind her falls in full white folds
The mantle sacred to queenly brides;
Her silken shift around her glides
As a snake of curious golds.

A prayer still scents her panting breath,
But Hope is clinched in her tremulous hands;
Who enters here uncalled—so stands
The law of the Medes—woos death.

O fairest daughter of that race
Whose fate alone canst thou make sure,
What gloom of Kinghood shall endure
The dawn which lights thy face!

WHITE AND GOLD ON GREEN

AGAINST the cliff, asweat with mould,
Like a snake skin, green in a pale moonlight,
A virgin lies as a splash of white
On a heap of shattered gold.

Her raiment torn to shreds, and scrolled
As scud blown loose by the driving storm
Lays bare the swell and strain of her form
As she writhes on her rack of gold.

She is dying, bruised and racked with gold,
Her bosom bleeds where a jewel smote;
From crispèd feet to gulping throat
She is white with death and cold.

Woe to the shameless virgin who sold
Rome's maidenhead to the Sabine: Woe!
Tarpeia dies accursed, as snow
In fire, on her bed of gold.

BLACK ON SILVER

A SHADOWY figure robed in black,
As a priestess, stands on the slimy ledge
Of tufa, flush with the river's edge,
Intently looking back.

Across swift Tiber, spread in the night—
A swirl of eddies from shore to shore,
Aglow with the luscience of molten ore,
In the sullen lunar light.

About her like a banner whips
Her dusky fell of loosened hair,
Her clammy raiment moulds her bare
As the water slowly drips.

Through night and Tiber, back to her home,
The Virgin Cloelia turns at the last
To gaze defiance at danger past,
And safe on the breast of Rome.

SILVER ON BLUE

THE falling waters weave a screen

Of sprays and moonbeams of sapphire blue,
Behind which rears up, shimmering through,
The sorceress Melusine.

Her sharp white breasts are strained and bare,
Her hands are locked behind her head,
While in sluggish coils of lustrous red
Around her crawls her hair.

Her loins and thighs are casèd in
A sheath of phosphorescent scales—
Her elfin armor—which flares and pales,
Like a hungry python's skin.

Beware the beautiful thing unclean!
The woman-snake who shines and sings!
For her voice is poison, her beauty stings:
The sorceress Melusine.

WHITE ON RED GOLD

THIS is the nether deep of hells!

In swirls of fire a seething flood,
Afoam with tears, afroth with blood,
In Eternal Torment wells.

Gaunt ruddy stalactites depend

Like flaming spears from the upper gloom,
A drip with the bloody sweat of doom
And agony without end.

An angel, poised in the core thereof

On crystal wings, and clad in wear
Irradiant, uplifts in prayer
Her clasped hands in love.

When Satan fell, of the Seraphim

Eloa loved him with so great
A love, she cast aside her state,
And sinless, followed him.



**THE SEVEN CHORDS OF THE
LYRE**



PREFACE

*On Seven Hills sat Rome, and dared the levin ;
On Impious Egypt Seven Curses fell ;
The Seven Sins illumine Dante's Hell ;
And Seven Virtues star the Churchman's Heaven ;
The dark Mid-Age held Seven Champions 'plevin ;
While older time their Seven Marvels tell ;
The thunder rolls, Seven-stringed, from Phoebus'
shell ;
And swords which stab the Virgin's bosom are Seven.*

*Where e'er we turn, forever facing us,
The Archaic pot-hook stretches out its arm
From dimmest pasts—as a gallows, ominous.
I heed the Warning ; Thou Divinely Young
And Fair beyond all praising ! Let thy Charm
In Seven Songs—Mine Italy—be sung.*



GENOA

SUPERB and dominant she lifts, to greet
The stranger, coming over seas to her,
That diadem of hills: resplendent spur
From out the Virgin Alps, and still abeat
With pulse of wars and trades long obsolete,
Beneath which, once, she ruled the alternate purr
And snarl of fleets, like hungry wolves, astir
For blood or gold, accounting either sweet.

Then came the grip of death with Venice—war
Where Cain smote Cain—which left thee wounded sore,
A naked quarry, France and Spain between!
Yet be that as a shadow which has been;
Arise! And claim thy birthright as of yore,
The sunshine on thy hills still crowns thee Queen.

NAPLES

THE shore-line curves, before the purple scythe
Which sweeps from Baia's flashing sands of gold
To far-off Capri, whom the waves enfold
A sapphire set in diamonds. How lithe
And ever girlish doth she leap and writhe,
This sacred sea! What modern were so bold
To scoff at legends, Hesiod has told
Of Amphitrite, when Song and Faith were blithe.

Alas! Not so; the glamour wanes and dies.
The same blue veil is on the hills, the same
Vesuvius lifts his Altar-gift of flame;
But Naples, on the Goddess's couch now lies—
A slattern drab, with limbs sprawled anywise,
And sleeps her harlot sleep of naked shame.

· VENICE

SHE cowers in rags, who once in shining mail
Patrolled these inland waters, on her ark
Beneath the lion-wings of Holy Mark,
Valkyrie of the Christ, astride the gale.
She crawls in squalor, she whose ducal veil
Was starred with gems, whose robes with gold were
stark,
Before the face of whom all Fame grew dark,
All Riches paltry, and all Beauty stale.

She crouches tattered, sorrow-worn, and old,
Beside this sea, one time her bridal bed,
A mendicant! And yet such fire is shed,
In after-glow from splendors dead and cold,
A tragic halo rings her brows with gold;
'Tis Belisaria, begging for her bread.

ROME

UPON the granite of thy brows august
Two thousand years have poured, in blood and fire,
Their drip of Sorrow, Hatred, and Desire,
Their riots, murders, pestilence, and lust,
Till thou sit hooded in an obscene crust
Of sodden crimes, stagnating into mire,
A Solitude, but for the waning choir
Of priests, who batten on thy shards and dust.

Now come these little men of later time,
Who trick thee out in tawdry furbelows,
And daub thy tragic mask, to play the Mime
To mincing Paris! Man may superpose
On Squalor Shame, and Ridicule on Crime:
Thy face, Eternal Rome, transplendent glows.

FLORENCE

HAIL, Florence, full of grace! Madonna, hail!

Beyond all others blessed be thy womb!

About thy brows the love of man shall bloom,
In prayer and song, till flesh and spirit fail;
All lands, all times, all creeds of ours assail

Thy shrine with pilgrimage, till scarce is room,
For one late come, before thy shining tomb
To kneel, so dense thy worshippers prevail.

For thou wert chosen to bear the sacred gift
Of Art again to man; from out the drift

Of crumbling time thou bad'st him rise and tower,
A God resurgent, clothed in beauty and power,
With face of fire, and flashing arms uplift
To sanctify thy name, O Lily-flower!

SIENNA

BLOOD-BOLTERED mountain-cat! Whose den is pronged
On trident hills, which redden and rumble still
With old volcanic fevers, and the thrill
Of unforgotten battles! How he wronged
Who calls her vain, the grim old bard, who songed
Of Heaven and Hell! She vain? whose every will
Still drooled for blood, nor ever got her fill,
Though charnels heaped, and reeking shambles
thronged?

One thing redeems her, gems her with a crown
So radiant, all her crimes are as a speck;
When all her Tuscan sisters, town by town,
Like shackled slaves, lay grovelling at the beck
Of Pope and Spain, she would not bend the neck;
Free to the last, till Freedom's star went down.

RAVENNA

BETWEEN the Po, the sea, and the Apennine,
There lies a land beshrouded in the pall
Of fogs implacable, where fevers crawl
Like slinking ghosts among its tragic pine;
Here Rome, the hoary She-wolf, once divine,
But toothless grown, last bayed her battle call,
Last crouched to spring, her last great kill of all,
Upon the unnumbered hordes of Gothic swine,

And died the death worth chanting. Now beneath
Blind skies, uncheered by plays of light and shade
She thrones, Ravenna, casèd in her sheath
Of harsh Mosaics, porphyries and jade,
A mummy, glaring through its lipless teeth
And sockets void; Rome-haunted and afraid.



OTHER SONNETS

AZRAEL

LIFT up your heads, ye everlasting Gates!
For on the threshold, where your portals throw
Their shadows big with mysteries and woe,
The Archangel Azrael in silence waits
Admission to his realm. No diadem freights
The brows august, no sword of living fire
Leaps in his hand, no robes of King's attire
Bespeak the imperial Herald of the Fates!

Upon his straight and narrow couch, with eyes
Immovable, and sealed lips, he lies
In awful majesty, the King of Dreads!
For on the dim and haunted other land
We know not of, alone at his command,
Ye Everlasting Gates! lift up your heads.

FIAT LUX

"LET there be Light!" He said; and lo! the world
Broke into color, as a smitten harp
Breaks into sudden song; against the scarp
Of purple mounts the crimson sunbeams swirled,
The woods were golden with flower-gems bepearled,
The sea shot silver to the very warp
Of blushing virgin skies, and Life grew sharp
With magic Splendor, as a flag unfurled.

Then Woman said: "Let there be light!" and lo!
The dark recesses of my soul grew white,
As in the Dawn primeval; at a blow
The shadows crept like reptiles out of sight,
And where was Eblis but a while ago
Stands Love, Eternal Warden of the Light!

IN THE CATHEDRAL AT SENS

We stood beneath an old Cathedral nave
And listened—while a far, high organ poured
In thunderous anthems surging chord on chord
Thro' fretted rafters, like a lifting wave—
A mighty lamentation from the grave
Of that unnumbered, clean-forgotten horde,
The immemorable Dead, who pray the Lord
For some requital of the life he gave.

Had not ye Sunshine? Poor forgotten Dead!
And Song, the living wine of hearts bowed down?
Had not ye dreamful Sleep? Had not ye Love,
Which circled flesh and Soul in fiery crown?
There is no prize for Life, once Life is sped,
But Living, ah! how sweet the wage thereof!

MORS NON ULTIMA

WE cast it off, our heavy load of days,
And lie down by the roadside, out of breath,
With bursting brows and flesh that quivereth
With overstrain of toil. Our ears and gaze
How eagerly we reach toward the haze
Of coming night, to look our first on Death,
To listen for that last command which saith:
"Thy work is done, good servant! Go thy ways!"

And then, to rest—But is the rest so sure?
What if we find but heavier loads instead?
What if the life-long training to endure
Were but to fit us for the task ahead?
Who knows what struggles hide, what toils mature,
Behind that awful jaw-clinch of the Dead?

A RECIPE

Good Student, take thou first a Woman—young,
And sweet, and fair, but—more important still—
(For thereby hangs the Future, good or ill),
Let her be She all other maids among.
First in thy heart, and last upon thy tongue.
Then in the ripening time, as God may will,
Add Children, two or three, nay! to thy fill,
No limit on the number need be sprung.

Next choose a House; no hackneyed box for hire,
But one, thy very own, in years to come,
As in the past, and now: for it is good
The nest should be coeval with the brood.
With Money season, as thy Tastes require;
So reads the recipe: "To make a Home."

THE 'HOLY LADDER

THE ladder of Jacob's dream? Who has not scaled
Its jewelled stairway through the solemn night,
To find at last the Sky, spread out of sight—
Dark, inaccessible—a Deep unsailed!
Who has not climbed the rungs of song, and failed
To snare those words, whose wings of fire-flight
Had spanned the Darkness, and attained the light
Where Love in splendor sits, by Splendors hailed.

How often, straining from its loftiest rung,
Have I stood dumb before the Deep of Love,
Which bar'ds most tuneful still have left unsung
For lack of words to tell the deep thereof—
And cried for eagle-wings to soar among
The Perfect Songs which saunter past, above.

THE VALUE OF A LITTLE WATER

If one came forth before the Judgment-Seat
Who bore between his hands nor tribute-gold,
Nor frankincense and myrrh—as Kings of old
Out of the timeless East, came forth to greet
The Baby-God: would silver rebeck bleet?
Or golden trumpet blare? Would harps, which hold
The pent-up thunder-hymns, their wings unfold
To canopy the path before his feet?

Nay! though in rags, or naked to the bone,
Or fouler than all nakedness, he came
Studded with boils, and scaled with leprosy,
If he but show one puny tear of his
Which hath been shed for suffering not his own,
The Gates shall lift, Hosannahs ring his name!

MATER REDEMPTRIX

I WISH I could believe that once there came
To cleanse the Race of Earth and Earthy things
An Holy One, who loved us, bore the stings
And bruises for us, shouldered all our shame,
Our heapèd load of sins—beyond a name—
And died, that all this too might die. What wings
Such pure belief might lend a soul who sings
A blind-eyed song, a halting prayer and lame.

And yet when I remember She has been
My maker, my redeemer, and my hope
On Earth; and now her spirit guards her child
Through darkness and the devious ways I grope. . . .
One Saviour have I known and proved and seen!
Why should the Master Miracle seem so wild?

DAWN ON THE AMICALOLA

THE purple hood of prayer is on the hills,
These huge dumb priests who kneel around the Night
As if atoning, by some fateful rite,
For all the sins of Earth, and human ills;
A rugged ring, whose changeless presence stills
The fever pulse of Life, whose shadows smite
The present blind with sleep. It is the height
Of Darkness! with a shiver, crawls and chills

The wind, slow fanning hippogriffen wings!
And in my heart I ask what fearful things,
What cursed plague, what nameless martyrdoms
Are these grim beadsmen calling on our slums?
When upward in the East there sudden springs
A burst of crimson. Lo! the answer comes.

PALIMPSESTS

FAIR sheets of Vellum, soft to the eye and touch,
And consecrate to highest Thought, from East
Or West; a poet's table spread in feast!
Then came the Goths: fire-stain, and bloody smutch,
When Culture strangled in the devils' clutch.
Then utter night, when Bruno, simple priest,
Foments his pot with Us, or stalls his beast. . . .
Oh! we have been befouled, bescribbled much:

For when the beasts had done, the fools began
And over all the pure and stately scroll,
Their lives of Saints, their gawky litanies ran
In clown's grimace and monkish folderal
And yet beneath it all, surviving whole,
The Song divine still sings the Hope of Man.

TRAVELLERS' NOTES

PREFACE

*Tourists, when the furious charge is
Made upon them by the foe,
Draw their notes on Morgan Harjes,
Brown & Shipley, or John Monroe.*

*Gustibus non disputandum—
Here's another tourist's prank!
Who has drawn his notes at random
On a vague Parnassian Bank.*

*Were they honoured, or protested?
Little use the inquiry now:
He was much more interested
In the Why than in the How.*

IN THE DOLOMITES

SAYS Pomagagnon to Tofana Mount:

“Oh, snow-clad sister of mine!

What are the three huge rents I count

In those glacier robes of thine?”

“These ages, beneath the Storm and the Sun,

Have I kneeled as under a rod,

And these the wounds, oh, Pomagagnon!

Where smote the wrath of God.”

Says Mount Tofana to Pomagagnon:

“Oh, huge red brother of mine,

What are the three foul stains upon

Thy hunchback granite spine?”

“These ages I stand under Sun and Stars,

An enduring rack, Tofan’!

The stains thou seest are the Slavery Scars

Of that crueller Master, Man!”

MARLOTTE

A PLEASANT drive to a pretty town,
By painters loved, this Marlotte!
All homely grays and russet brown,
Like much bewerthered Charlotte.

A pleasant drive on a pretty day,
Of fitful shine and sprinkling;
Hood up, and there's a squall to pay!
Hood down, and sunbeams twinkling.

A pretty drive in any case,
For when alone together,
It's hip! for any sort of a place,
In any kind of weather.

FONTAINEBLEAU

O FOUNTAIN of Beautiful Water!

As pilgrims to kneel at thy Shrine,
We have come to thee, Somnolent daughter
Of France, for the Peace which is thine.

Far away from the Crowd thou abhorrest,
From the surge of the World and its bark,
We have come to the naves of thy forest,
We have come to the maze of thy park.

And the bond of old Love shall grow tauter,
The frets of high living surcease:
O Fountain of Beautiful Water,
For thine is the Kingdom of Peace.

CAPE COD

Ah! the snore of thy sleepy seas,
The sighs of thy perfect air!
Not a thing to vex, not a thought to tease—
Not even a microscopic crease
In thy roseleaf, anywhere.

Yet, an insatiate thing is Man!
Was Cæsar content when first in Rome?
With all thy blessings about me, I plan
Some scheme of living whereby I can
Be lazier than at home.

ON THE NORMAN COAST

I'VE seen seas green over sunlit sand,
Or black under lowering weather,
But never, till come to this Norman land,
Both black and green together.

I've seen the water, at dawn, like a flame,
At noon, like a peacock's feather,
But never, till unto this shore I came,
Both blue and gold together.

I've seen it silver under the moon,
Or in sunset blush to heather,
But never till here, of an afternoon,
Both purple and gray together.

Oh, Norman Manche! I now conceive—
The credit: all Max Muller's—
Thine etymology, thou sleeve
Of Joseph's Coat of colors!

ON THE ROAD TO PISTOJA

A BEAUTIFUL day, and a beautiful ride
For a beautiful town to see!
While far and near, on every side
The peasants, male and female, vied
In plaiting furiouslee.

Straw hats on floors and roofs were spread,
Straw hats on every tree,
Straw-hatted the very river-bed,
And still all Tuscany plaiting ahead,
And plaiting furiouslee.

Till there came a delicious maddening dream
Of a mad-hatter's world to be,
Where we drifted down a plaited stream
In a leghorn hat, tipped hard-a-beam—
And plaiting furiouslee.

FLORENCE

FOR close upon a thousand years
A thousand mighty Craftsmen,
Of olden Greeks, the single peers,
As builders, carvers, draughtsmen,

Have wrought with chisel, brush, and square,
In holy calm or frenzy,
To make incomparably fair
This jewel in stone: Firenze!

And thus they labored to the end—
Unknown to them the reason—
Two simple “foresters” might spend
A *piu che perfetto* season.

PRATO

At Prato Church there's a pulpit stand
Which Mino carved in stone,
In shape of a beaker, fit for the hand
Of a giant God alone.

O Bard whose songs in stone are versed,
What a beautiful trope of thine!
For the Holy Word the peoples thirst:
Lo! a cup for the living wine.

IN THE SMOKY RIDGE OF GEORGIA

I AM voiceless here: these hugenesses appall!
For him who stands beneath the vast dim wall
Of hunchback forests, climbing, crowd on crowd,
Toward the King-peak hooded in the cloud,
Life seems such puppet show, and Man so small.

Where God's unnumbered names in thunder fall,
Where mountains chaunt and leaping waters bawl,
As one deep to another calls aloud—

I am voiceless here.

But in the future, if the World should call
My lips to song—a David sang to Saul—
This memory may lift erect and proud
Before my waiting soul, in Kingly shroud,
And give me strength for mighty song, withal

I am voiceless here.

**RONDEAUX, RONDELS, AND
TRIOLETS**

*O Rondeau, Rondel, Triolet !
Joujoux de la tant douce France !
Le bon vieux temps s'affriolait—
O Rondeau, Rondel, Triolet !
De votre atour bariolé,
Et de vos rimes de bombance :
O Rondeau, Rondel, Triolet !
Joujoux de la tant douce France !*

ON THE OLDEN TIME

IN the Olden Time, through Turk or Djinn,
Through fire and blood, would a man but win
The virgin blossom of Woman's love,
With mace he smote, with sword he clove,
"Pour Dieu et ma Dame," quoth the Paladin.

But now the dreams have been gathered in;
The fairest fabric our poets spin
Is crash to what the troubadours wove
In the Olden Time.

To-day, the gold transmutes to "tin,"
The Stock Exchange is the lists wherein—
With Bulls and Bears for the beasts thereof—
My Lady Cunegonde casts her glove. . . .
We risk our cash where they risked their skin
In the Olden Time.

TO AN OLD HOUSE

Nor much to boast about, this old
Dilapidated house: that bold
Democritus himself would grue
With horrors at thy walls askew
And roofs half-eaten through with mould.

For Summer-heat and Winter-cold
Thou art unmatched; a very Jew
Could ask for thee, shouldst thou be sold—
Not much!

And yet such memories manifold
Of happy love sleep in thy hold,
There's pleasure in thy very view,
And joy to walk thy creaks anew,
Shall I defame thee now, or scold?
Not much!

MISOZOIC RONDEAU

So Time goes by in Splendor or in Weeds,
With braying trumpets heralding great deeds,
Or dead-march monodies of muffled drums.
While Kingdoms and all other sort of "doms"
Go down, and Principalities and Creeds,

Into the Nameless Nothing no one heeds,
The litter whence Ingenious History breeds
Pat Morals: Slums from Flowers, and Flowers from
Slums!

So Time goes by.

And we, poor Mushrooms, sprung in trodden meads,
Alas! who knows from what hap-hazard seeds;
We go on swealing till the Darkness comes,
While Nature sits by, mumbling senile gums,
Unheeding all, as crones who tell their beads.
So Time goes by.

RONDEL

*(Fortunately for the recipient, accompanied by
Russian violets.)*

THE sweetest thanks I can express
Are naught to what your note had earned;
Though Fancy shone, or Pathos burned,
Mere words are nothing—rhymes still less.

My simple Muse does not profess
A skill to sing, where you're concerned—
The sweetest thanks I can express
Are naught to what your note has earned.

And so, in this, my sore distress,
To these blue friends of mine—well-learned
In saying pretty things—I turned
For help to send, in fitting dress,
The sweetest thanks I can express.

RONDEL

(In answer to a very pretty compliment in verse.)

If a poet meet a poet
Coming through the mail,
Were his homage ne'er so hale,
How the dickens can he show it?

Pen and ink are fire inchoate,
Still I fear me doomed to fail,
If a poet meet a poet
Coming through the mail.

Words were better? Yes, I know it!
Better still: that Scotty tale
Touching "bodies"—I'll go bail
That were still the best introit,
If a poet meet a poet
Coming through the mail.

LONG-LEGGED TRIOLETS

HOME again from our wanderings
Through the long blue maze of a holiday!
The steamer puffs, the water sings;
"Home again from our wanderings!"
And we, grown feign of serious things,
Rejoice to turn, after muckle play,
Home again from our wanderings
Through the long blue maze of a holiday.

Through the long blue maze of a holiday
We carried our Love, and kept it fair.
Not once did its glory dim or gray
Through the long blue maze of a holiday.
And now, come back to our hearth to stay,
We know by the radiance it lightens there,
Through the long blue maze of a holiday
We carried our Love and kept it fair.

THE MASTER OF THE GODS

A LITTLE while and we shall not
Look on His face again; our lot
Is not as the Angels to lay hold
Upon His trailing robes of gold,
And chain Him to our little spot.

Yet all we see Him; for a jot
Of time He lingers by our cot,
To tell His glories manifold
A little while.

And be His stay no matter what,
His coming ne'er shall be forgot;
The memory clings, to keep the cold
From out our hearts, when growing old. . . .
Oh! praise Him then for that He taught
A little while.

**AS TO THE IDLENESS OF VERSE; OR, THE
VERSATILITY OF IDLERS**

**ALL the poems known to Fame
Are but idle rhymes in books!
I know one would put to shame
All the poems known to Fame;
'Tis a simple little dame
Yet beside her comely looks
All the poems known to Fame
Are but idle rhymes in books!**



PINS AND NEEDLES

THE EMPTY CRADLE

FAR to the south the birds have flown,
Red stains on the woods grow wider,
As the mother sits, apart and alone,
An empty cradle beside her.

Sweet lips apart, soft eyes which strain;
Alas! for this world of treason!
How cruel to know there will come again
Both birds and leaves, next season!

But this—and yet she is smiling. . . . Pause
O Poet! and spare thy plumbing!
If the cradle be empty, it's only because
Its little tenant is coming.

A CHARMER

SHE has no beauty; my memory trips
O'er a hundred prettier women;
But an ugliness, which puckers the lips,
The smart of a ripe persimmon.

She has no brains, and is learned alone
In her golfing and dancing classes;
But in her eyes you may see your own
Conceit, as in looking-glasses.

She has no heart; just a neat little pump,
A marvel of regular action;
Yet I'd give my life to hear it thump
But once out of time by a fraction.

THE HAPPY FISHERMAN

THE night is rough, and the wind sings shrill
On the rocks where the foam grins white.
O Lord! save all honest folk from ill
Who are out at sea, the night!

And the poet's song goes in fervor forth
To the men who fish, to their wives
Who kneel on shore, with face to the North,
To pray for their husbands' lives.

Meanwhile the wife, midst her pots and jars,
Is raising—politely—Cain;
While the fisherman smokes, and thanks his stars
He is safe on the stormy Main.

SORTES MATRIMONIALES

You often ask me what I think
Of Marriage, and complain
I simply smoke my pipe and wink,
Nor answer back again.

Is it real Heaven? as some suppose,
Or earth? as others say?
Old graybeard Montaigne grunts: "Who knows!"
"Perhaps!" laughs Rabelais.

To me the problem seems so vast,
So intricately set,
I think, and think. . . . When Life is past
I shall be thinking yet.

THE SEA

THE season is listless and the hour supine:

As the tide goes slipping out.

Look at the beautiful beast! Feline

As a cat, as a nun devout.

All gray and cloistrally decorous,

With a purr of prayer at her lips;

Who can mistake the mincing puss:

A maid, to her finger-tips.

As soft as cream, and sweet as wine,

But logical, not a bit;

It takes, oh, type of the Feminine,

A German to call thee "IT!"

AN INTROIT OF SPRING

OVER the Earth, lying stark in her nakedness,
Over the graves of old seasons long dead,
Spring throws his mantle of blossoming flakedness,
Making a carpet for April to tread.

Lift up your voices, you red-throated Choristers:
Robins whom April has brought in her train;
Lift up your censors, you shy little foresters,
Pansies and Violets, smell sweet again.

Love! yea, arouse thee from silence which chronicles
Comfort, as torpor betokens the Cold—
Sing thou the Spring, in his gala canonicals;
Love! who art April, though centuries old.

A VALENTINE

SHE looks so precise, with her modest blue eyes,
And her lips rounded out as a cherry,
That one thinks her at first in devotions immersed:
Pretty, Prim, Puritan Mary.

Do not call her sedate, on the spot—only wait
Till you happen to catch her unwary;
She's the spirit of Fun, in the shell of a nun,
Pretty, Prim, Puritan Mary.

Though her rosy lips grow to the shape of an O,
She's not given to sing "Miserere,"
And her lashes but screen such a frolic between:
Pretty, Prim, Puritan Mary.

What care I, if she drape, in a Calvinist cape,
The gossamer wings of a fairy,
I'll be Pagan no more, but a bigot adore
Pretty, Prim, Puritan Mary.

SWEET BELLS JANGLED

I **FEEL** within me—grumbling low—
That demon born to bait us
Poor poets, who thro' weal or woe
Are doomed to struggle, grunt, and throe
To expel thee, Divine Afflatus!

I know thee there; I feel thee sting
Beneath my metrical tunic;
Prelusive, as I think to sing,
And yet, I doubt thou art a thing
Virgilian Schools dubbed Punic.

But stay! It's not the Muse who's wrong;
Her Heliconian philter
Is pure as ever—clear and strong,
There's nothing the matter with the Song,
It's the fiddle that's out of kilter.

THE MAGIC MIRROR

A MAGIC mirror hangs the wall
Of every poet's tenement.
From heart of which, if he but call,
Nay though he call not, strangely blent,

In tones and colors marvellous
With forms divine and faces fond,
The visions rise, which are sent to us
From Worlds above us and beyond.

And if—alone to hear him sing
The glorious mysteries which he sees—
The song-bird hushes on its wing,
The forest silences her trees—

And even Men may fall to be
Respectful, in their flippant wise,
What awe were theirs could they but see
The splendors which appall his eyes.

“NEITHER WILL I CONDEMN THEE”

ON the lowliest step of the altar stair,
In tattered raiment, with matted hair,
A woman kneeled in passionate prayer,
Fierce in her lowliness.

A stray, from the squalid slaves of Sin,
Who toil in shame, and in sorrow spin,
From the outer world she had drifted in,
Fain of God's holiness.

With averted brows pure virgins passed,
And scornful matrons, with eyes upcast,
Whilst man recoiled from the leper, aghast:
Man, who did fashion it!

Though the world has closed, as upon the dead,
From the windows that rise to the skies overhead
A sunbeam falls on the cowering head—
One is compassionate.

THE MASTER-GODS

It's a humorous thing when the Spring is green
To see young Sunbeams tripping between
A kissable Earth and a kissing sky,
Like a peal of laughter rippling by.

It's a lovable thing when years are few,
To remember red lips and eyes of blue—
As children go gathering flowers—to tress
A chaplet of dreams for idleness.

A beautiful thing: this gossamer spun
By a boyish heart or a childish sun!
But Sunshine truly, or Love? Ah, no!
The Gods reveal themselves not so.

A landscape cowering beneath the pall
Of a black and angry thunder-squall,
When gold, like an arrow, shoots from above. . . .
So strike the Masters: Sun and Love.

REQUIESCAT

Swing the Bell!

Another year goes down to the dead!
With rigid feet and bedraggled wings,
With broken crown still circling its head,
Down to the grave of forgotten things.

Swing the Bell!

Over the days of its glories departed,
Over the days of its miseries spent,
Over the promise it bore, when it started,
Over the failure it was as it went.

Swing the Bell!

It lived and failed—it was but a year;
Shall a year be more than a man divine?
Peace to thy Sleep, and Forgiveness here,
For I loved thee well, and thy faults were mine.

Swing the Bell!

EDAX RERUM

FROM oldest ages to our own,
All they who preach or rhyme,
Who paint on wall or grave on stone,
Have ever pictured Time:

A vagrant on the face of Earth,
A graybeard grim and lithe,
An hour-glass dangling at his girth,
And in his grip a scythe.

What mockery to call thee fleet!
How false thy snowy locks!
Thy brows are strong as Noon, thy feet
Are planted like the Rocks.

Grave Sphinx who wert and still shalt be
Immutable as now,
Beneath thee whirls the driven sea:
'Tis we who pass, not Thou.

A HOPE

If I were dead I should not care to sleep
In some funereal, tomb-environed spot,
Where plumed firs despond, and willows weep—
Where grief is formal, friendliness is not.

But rather, let me lie beneath some mound
Much used of summer nights for lovers' trysts,
Or under flags all afternoon asound
With clatter and thump of little feet and fists.

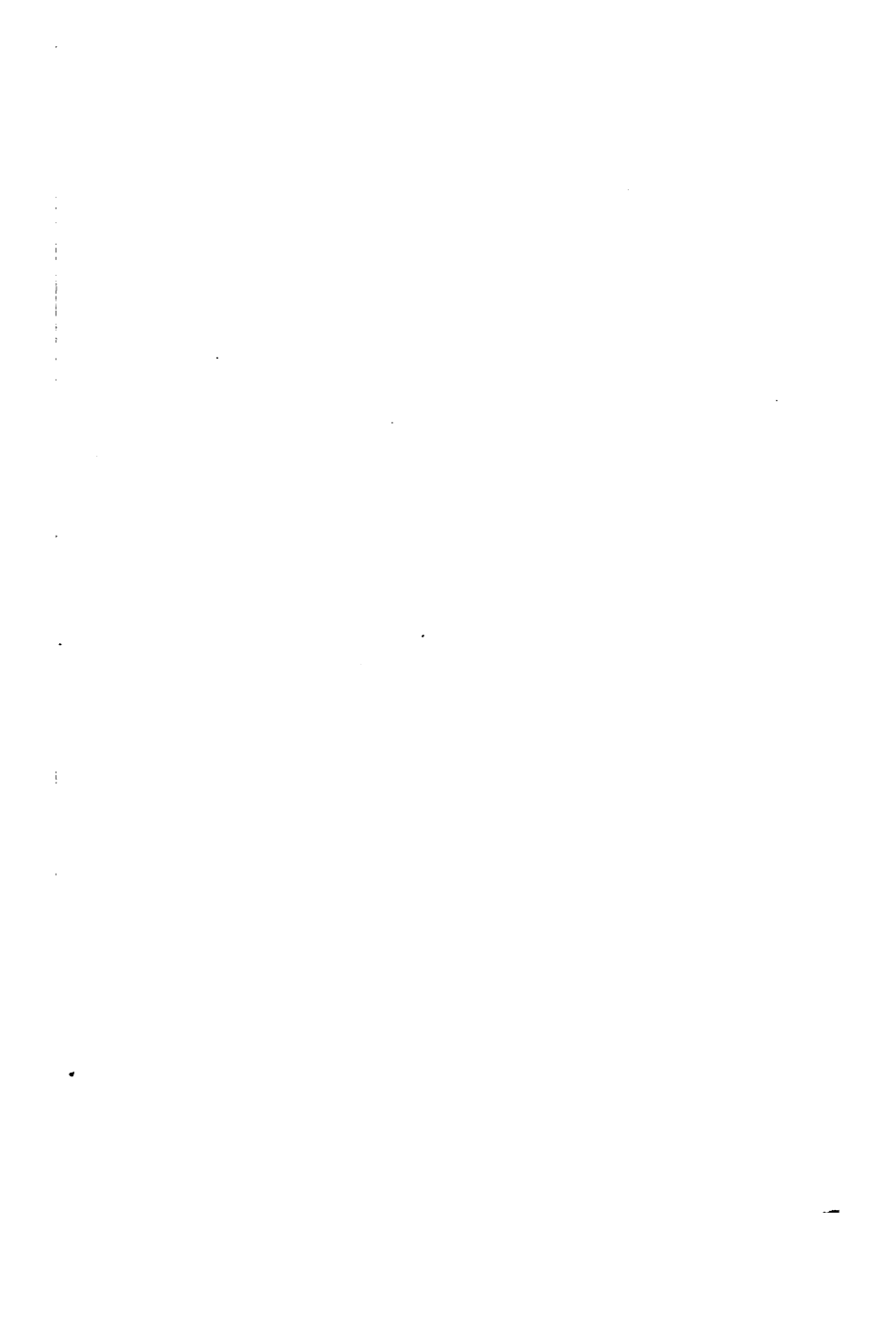
*Here's an end to the pedlar's pack:
Pins and needles, needles and pins;
Is there none to cry: Alack!
Here's an end to the pedlar's pack.
Wish me joy on my journey back?
That's the best my labour wins?
Here's an end to the pedlar's pack:
Pins and needles, needles and pins.*



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